CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

Sub A1

1.   A method for providing a user with Web-based information associated with program content viewable on a television, said method comprising the steps of:
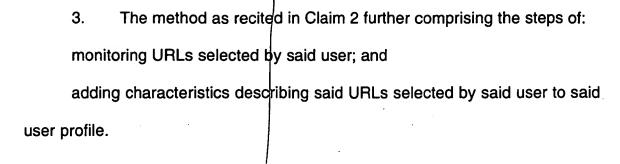
   a) receiving said program content;

   b) receiving a data stream comprising a set of Uniform Resource Locators (URLs) identifying Web sites associated with said program content; and

   c) selecting from said data stream one or more URLs of particular interest to a user;

   wherein said program content is displayed on said television and Web-based information identified by said one or more URLs is optionally displayed on a device other than said television.

2.   The method as recited in Claim 1 wherein said step c) comprises the steps of:

   c1) comparing characteristics describing each of said URLs with a user profile comprising user-specified characteristics; and

   c2) identifying a subset of URLs satisfying said user-specified characteristics.

3. The method as recited in Claim 2 further comprising the steps of:

monitoring URLs selected by said user; and

adding characteristics describing said URLs selected by said user to said user profile.

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4. The method as recited in Claim 1 wherein said data stream comprising said set of URLs is embedded in said program content.

5. The method as recited in Claim 1 wherein said data stream

10 comprising said set of URLs is received from a remote device via the Internet.

6. The method as recited in Claim 1 further comprising the step of:

d) receiving a command for performing a function from a remote device via the Internet.

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7. The method as recited in Claim 1 wherein said Web-based information comprises Web pages corresponding to said subset of URLs.

8. In a device communicatively coupled to the Internet, a method for

20 providing a user with Web-based information associated with program content viewable on a television, said method comprising the steps of:

a) receiving information identifying program content being received at a television that is communicatively coupled to the Internet;

b) identifying a set of Uniform Resource Locators (URLs) for Web sites associated with said program content; and

c) communicating one or more of said URLs to a second device that is communicatively coupled to the Internet;

5   wherein said program content is displayed on said television and Web-based information associated with said set of URLs is optionally displayed on a device other than said television.

9.   The method as recited in Claim 8 wherein said step b) further

10   comprises the step of:

b1) selecting from said set of URLs a subset of URLs of particular interest to a user.

10.   The method as recited in Claim 9 wherein said step b1) comprises

15   the steps of:

comparing characteristics describing each of said URLs with a user profile comprising user-specified characteristics; and

identifying a subset of URLs satisfying said user-specified characteristics.

20   11.   The method as recited in Claim 10 further comprising the steps of:

monitoring URLs selected by said user; and

adding characteristics describing said URLs selected by said user to said user profile.

12. The method as recited in Claim 8 wherein said step a) comprises the step of:

receiving information identifying a channel associated with said program

5   content.

13. The method as recited in Claim 8 wherein said second device is a

set top box communicatively coupled to said television, wherein said URLs

received by said second device are communicated to said device other than

10   said television.

14. The method as recited in Claim 8 wherein said second device is a

computer system having a display screen, wherein said Web-based information

is optionally displayed on said display screen.

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15. A method for providing Web-based information associated with

program content viewable on said television, said method comprising the steps

of:

a) receiving a set of Uniform Resource Locators (URLs) identifying Web

20   sites associated with said program content;

b) selecting one or more URLs of particular interest to a user;

c) receiving Web-based information identified by said one or more URLs;

and

d) displaying said Web-based information;

wherein said program content is separately displayed on said television.

16. The method as recited in Claim 15 wherein said step b) comprises the steps of:

b1) comparing characteristics describing each of said URLs with a user profile comprising user-specified characteristics; and

b2) identifying a subset of URLs satisfying said user-specified characteristics.

17. The method as recited in Claim 16 further comprising the steps of:

monitoring URLs selected by said user; and

adding characteristics describing said URLs selected by said user to said user profile.

18. The method as recited in Claim 15 wherein said set of URLs is received from said television, wherein said set of URLs are provided to said television in a data stream embedded in said program content.

19. The method as recited in Claim 15 wherein said set of URLs is received from a remote device via the Internet.

20. The method as recited in Claim 15 further comprising the step of:

e) receiving a command for performing a function from a remote device via the Internet.

5   21. The method as recited in Claim 15 wherein said Web-based information comprises Web pages corresponding to said one or more URLs.

22. The method as recited in Claim 15 wherein said television is communicatively coupled with a set top box.

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23. A set top box comprising:

a bus;

a memory unit coupled to said bus; and

a processor coupled to said bus, said processor for executing a method

15 for providing a user with Web-based information associated with program content viewable on a television, said method comprising the steps of:

a) receiving said program content;

b) receiving a data stream comprising a set of Uniform Resource Locators (URLs) identifying Web sites associated with said program content;

20 and

c) selecting from said data stream one or more URLs of particular interest to a user;

wherein said program content is displayed on said television and Web-based information identified by said one or more URLs is optionally displayed on a device other than said television.

5   24.   The set top box of Claim 23 wherein said step c) of said method comprises the steps of:

c1)   comparing characteristics describing each of said URLs with a user profile comprising user-specified characteristics; and

c2)   identifying a subset of URLs satisfying said user-specified

10   characteristics.

25.   The set top box of Claim 24 wherein said method further comprises the steps of:

monitoring URLs selected by said user; and

15   adding characteristics describing said URLs selected by said user to said user profile.

26.   The set top box of Claim 23 wherein said data stream comprising said set of URLs is embedded in said program content.

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27.   The set top box of Claim 23 wherein said data stream comprising said set of URLs is received from a remote device via the Internet.

28.   The set top box of Claim 23 wherein said method further comprises the step of:

d) receiving a command for performing a function from a remote device via the Internet.

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29.   The set top box of Claim 23 wherein said Web-based information comprises Web pages corresponding to said subset of URLs.

30.   A computer-usable medium having computer-readable program code embodied therein for causing a computer system to perform the steps of:

a) receiving program content viewable on a television;

b) receiving a data stream comprising a set of Uniform Resource Locators (URLs) identifying Web sites associated with said program content; and

15   c) selecting from said data stream one or more URLs of particular interest to a user;

wherein said program content is displayed on said television and Web-based information identified by said one or more URLs is optionally displayed on a device other than said television.

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31.   The computer-usable medium of Claim 30 wherein said computer-readable program code embodied therein causes a computer system to perform the steps of:

c1) comparing characteristics describing each of said URLs with a user profile comprising user-specified characteristics; and

c2) identifying a subset of URLs satisfying said user-specified characteristics.

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32. The computer-usable medium of Claim 31 wherein said computer-readable program code embodied therein causes a computer system to perform the steps of:

monitoring URLs selected by said user; and

10 adding characteristics describing said URLs selected by said user to said user profile.

33. The computer-usable medium of Claim 30 wherein said data stream comprising said set of URLs is embedded in said program content.

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34. The computer-usable medium of Claim 30 wherein said data stream comprising said set of URLs is received from a remote device via the Internet.

20 35. The computer-usable medium of Claim 31 wherein said computer-readable program code embodied therein causes a computer system to perform the step of:

d) receiving a command for performing a function from a remote device via the Internet.

36. The computer-usable medium of Claim 30 wherein said Web-based information comprises Web pages corresponding to said subset of URLs.

37. A set top box comprising:

means for receiving program content viewable on a television;

means for receiving a data stream comprising a set of Uniform Resource Locators (URLs) identifying Web sites associated with said program content; and

means for selecting from said data stream one or more URLs of particular interest to a user;
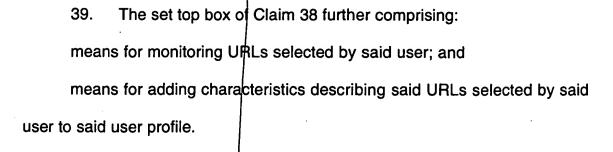
wherein said program content is displayed on said television and Web-based information identified by said one or more URLs is optionally displayed on a device other than said television.

38. The set top box of Claim 37 comprising:

means for comparing characteristics describing each of said URLs with a user profile comprising user-specified characteristics; and

means for identifying a subset of URLs satisfying said user-specified characteristics.

39.   The set top box of Claim 38 further comprising:

means for monitoring URLs selected by said user; and

means for adding characteristics describing said URLs selected by said user to said user profile.

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40.   The set top box of Claim 37 wherein said data stream comprising said set of URLs is embedded in said program content.

41.   The set top box of Claim 37 wherein said data stream comprising
10   said set of URLs is received from a remote device via the Internet.

42.   The set top box of Claim 37 comprising:

means for receiving a command for performing a function from a remote device via the Internet.

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43.   The set top box of Claim 37 wherein said Web-based information comprises Web pages corresponding to said subset of URLs.